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ABSTRACT

THE PROTECTION OF RESEARCH PERSONNEL, EQUIPMENT, AND DATA. Gary W. Witmer, USDA/APHIS/DWRC, Washington State University, Pullman. Rex O. Baker, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

Wildlife field research is important, conducted for various reasons, and often difficult work. Researchers must have state and federal permits and abide by various state and federal laws. The work must be approved by an Animal Care and Use Committee and meet requirements of the Animal Welfare Act. Despite this careful regulation, there have been attempts in recent years to disrupt legitimate research. Researchers have been subjected to harassment and threats, burglaries, fire bombings, and equipment vandalism or theft. Federal legislation, The Animal Enterprise Protection Act of 1992, makes such acts illegal and the persons involved subject to fines or incarceration. Researchers can help protect personnel, equipment, and data by: having paperwork and approvals in order and doing things in an approved manner in the field; informing appropriate agencies of their activities; educating themselves to the hazards and protective measures; developing a public relations program; following basic security procedures at buildings, pens, labs, and offices; screening potential employees and media personnel; conducting interviews away from research sites or facilities; providing radio communication between field personnel; avoiding confrontations with disruptive persons; changing research "modus operandi" periodically; and keeping a copy of data, files, and computer disks at a secondary location.